

Message Text

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ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ADP-00 SS-15 INR-10 EB-11 MC-02 L-03

RSR-01 RSC-01 /061 W

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R 131035Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0334

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 3156

STADIS//////////

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, BG

SUBJECT: BANGLADESH MILITARY SHOPPING

1. ON JULY 11 BD ARMY MAJOR FNU RASCHID, ARTILLERY
BRANCH, APPEARED EMBASSY ECONOMIC COMMERCIAL SECTION REQUESTING
INFORMATION ON AVAILABILITIES AND PRICES OF
ARTILLERY PIECES RANGING FROM 105 TO 155 MM,
LIGHT ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS, "LOCATING EQUIPMENT" SUCH
AS RADAR, ELECTRONIC METEOROLOGICAL SETS, "FIELD
SURVEY EQUIPMENT", MORTARS, AND SMALL
RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT, FOLLOWING DAY MAJOR
FAROOQ RAHMAN, DIRECTOR OF "ARMORED CORPS" TURNED
UP SEEKING INFORMATION ON PRICES AND AVAILABILITIES
OF ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS, LIGHT TANKS AND
AMPHIBIOUS VEHICLES. BOTH CAME IN UNIFORM AND
WITHOUT APPOINTMENT.

2. ACCORDING TO MAJOR RASCHID, ARMY HAS CONSTITUTED
"ARMAMENTS PROCUREMENT COMMITTEE" UNDER CHAIRMANSHIP
OF BRIGADIER ZIAUR RAHMAN, DEPUTE CHIEF OF STAFF,
BANGLADESH ARMY. MISSION OF THE MAJOR IS TO SOLICIT
PRICE INFORMATION AND TECHNICAL DATA FROM FOREIGN
EMBASSIES AND SUBMIT THEM TO THE COMMITTEE FOR FINAL
DECISION. ACCORDING TO BRITISH MILITARY ATTACHE
GROUP HAS APPROACHED FRENCH, GERMAN AND SOVIET
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EMBASSIES WITH SIMILAR REQUEST.

3. COMMENT: DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT MAJOR RAHMAN VISITED EMBASSY LAST YEAR WITH SIMILAR REQUEST (SEE DACCA 3172). QUESTION IS WHETHER ARMY IS OPERATING ON ITS OWN OR WITH BDG APPROVAL. (RASCHID SAID THE BDG HAS AUTHORIZED ARMY TO DRAW UP LIST OF EQUIPMENT NEEDS, COSTS AND POTENTIAL SUPPLIERS.) SOMEWHAT IRREGULAR FOR MILITARY OFFICERS TO APPEAR EMBASSY WITHOUT APPOINTMENT REQUESTING SUCH INFORMATION. POSSIBLE THAT ARMY, BEING POOR RELATION COMPARED TO AIR FORCE AND RAKKHI BAHINI IS ACTING ON OWN. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY IS THAT ARMY SHOPPING TOUR INDEED HAS BDG APPROVAL AND AIM IS TO CONVINCE ARMY THAT EQUIPMENT FROM WESTERN SOURCES NOT AVAILABLE AND HENCE IT WILL HAVE TO ACCEPT WHAT WE UNDERSTAND ARE GENEROUS SOVIET OFFERS TO PROVIDE EQUIPMENT IN LARGE QUANTITIES. EMBASSY OFFICER WHO RECEIVED VISITORS EXPLAINED U.S. ARMS POLICY TOWARD SUBCONTINENT AND GAVE NO ENCOURAGEMENT.

4. WE LEAVE IT TO DEPARTMENT TO DETERMINE DISTRIBUTION THIS MESSAGE TO OTHER USG AGENCIES.

NEWBERRY

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